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STATE FOR WHA/CAR (ACADIEUX)
EEB/IFD/OMA (JJACOBY)

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SUBJECT: JAMAICA: RESPONSE TO FISCAL TRANSPARENCY REPORT

REF: A) STATE 28885

SUMMARY

1. (U) The following is Post's response to questions listed in reftel regarding fiscal transparency in Jamaica.

2. (U) Jamaica's fiscal transparency and accountability is constitutionally mandated and legally enforced. The national budget is publicly available and fiscal numbers are published by the Ministry of Finance and Public Service each month and at the end of the fiscal year. These figures include both revenues (income) and expenditures. In addition, the Government of Jamaica's private and multilateral external lenders also require transparency and accountability as a condition for their loans (upon which Jamaica is heavily dependent).

3. (U) The Government of Jamaica's annual budgets are published and scrutinized by the government opposition, the media and the general public. The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ - the government's development assistance coordinating and economic planning agency) actively monitors the fiscal accounts and also publishes its analyses each quarter. As part of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) general data dissemination standard, the Government of Jamaica has voluntarily agreed to publish fiscal data on its website each month (www.mof.gov.jm). Each year the Ministry also publishes Estimates of Expenditure, Fiscal Accounts and a Memorandum on the Budget. The Auditor General, who is required to review the public accounts and present his/her findings to Parliament, is autonomous of the executive (the Prime Minister and Cabinet), as required by the Jamaican Constitution.

4. (U) At this time there are no U.S. government-sponsored programs with the Government of Jamaica to promote transparency and accountability in budgeting. The Minister of Finance and Public Service, Audley Shaw, announced in March 2008 that he received USD 300,000 from the World Bank to undertake a diagnostic study on corruption in Jamaica. The European Union also is in the process of funding a three-year debt reduction and growth enhancement program at a cost of USD 150 million. The effort will include fiscal transparency, debt containment, fiscal accountability and tax reforms to stimulate investment and growth.

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